

2001-X

~~SECRET/NODIS/EYES ONLY~~ACTION

March 6, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. KISSINGER

FROM: Helmut Sonnenfeldt

SUBJECT: French Interest in Adhering to US-Soviet Accident Agreement

In my memo of March 2 (Log #1934-Tab D), I noted Alphant's mentioning to Watson that the French had raised this subject with the Soviets and that the French are seriously considering adherence.

State on March 3 sent the attached message to Watson (Tab C), telling him that we should not leave the negative US view of this in doubt but that Watson should tell the French to take the matter up in Washington. I had asked State to clear this message here (because I wanted to discuss it with you) but they sent it without clearance on the grounds that it was only procedural.

The issue is troublesome because we really have no interest in French adherence but also should not handle the matter in a way that unnecessarily offends Pompidou.

When this first came up last September, at the time of Schumann's visit to the US and UN, we all agreed that it should be soft-pedaled. You recall of course that we had kept the accidents agreement deliberately and carefully bilateral and it was drafted with that consideration in mind. In the first place, any agreement among allies on this subject should not be identical with one between antagonists, especially when we are now talking about nuclear safety with the French. More important, we did not want to let the Soviets parlay this exercise into a scheme that isolates the Chinese.

We cannot of course stop the French from making an agreement with the Soviets; nor should we, if they feel that this is a matter of either security or self-respect, or both. But I think that we should give a clear statement of our attitude to the French at the highest level so that it will not be misinterpreted and create unnecessary hard feelings. This is especially important right now when Pompidou remains quite irritated over our monetary policy.

NSS, State Dept reviews completed

~~SECRET/NODIS/EYES ONLY~~

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I think two things are needed:

-- a backchannel to Dick Watson (who is probably a little annoyed at the State telegram anyway); and

-- a directive to the NSC (which was previously given the implementing responsibility for the accidents agreement -- your directive of September 29, 1971). (Tab E)

1 Log # 33143

Drafts of both are at Tabs A and B.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That you initial the message to Watson and have it dispatched;
2. That you sign the Directive to the USC.

HS:mm

SECRET/NODIS/EYES ONLY

SECRET

March 11, 1972

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EYES ONLY TO Ambassador Watson, American Embassy, Paris, France

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger, The White House *HK*

I appreciated your report on your talk with Alphand (your Paris 596) and I have also read the other reporting on Alphand's Moscow trip.

You will have received State's 036909 on the French interest in the accidental war agreement. I would not have objected at all to your carrying the ball on this but the message was sent without White House clearance.

In any case, I want you to know my thinking on this subject so that you can make sure Pompidou understands the situation.

Throughout the talks with the Soviets they attempted to draft the text in a way that would make it suitable for others to adhere. But we resisted this because we sensed in the Soviet tactic an effort to find a way to isolate the Chinese who of course are not likely to adhere. We also felt that a multilateral agreement might complicate relations between ourselves and our allies since as a practical matter the problems addressed in the US-Soviet agreement are hardly likely to arise between allies with whom we maintain close relations and contact.

It is of course entirely up to the French whether they would like to negotiate an agreement on this subject with the Soviets. We would be pleased to consult with them fully on the basis of our own experience. But we want to be sure the Elysee understands the reasons for a negative attitude toward French adherence to the existing US-Soviet agreement.

Warm regards,

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

SECRET/NODIS/SENSITIVE

March 11, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR

CHAIRMAN
NSC UNDER SECRETARIES COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: French Interest in Adhering to US-Soviet Agreement
to Reduce the Risk of the Outbreak of Nuclear War
Between the USA and USSR

REFERENCE: My Memorandum of September 29, 1971

The President has noted recent French expressions of interest in this subject. He does not wish the US to take any initiative to pursue this matter.

However, in view of Ambassador Watson's recent report the President directs that the NSC Under Secretaries Committee prepare for contingency use a statement to be made in response to a further French approach which would explain frankly the US reasons for opposing the adherence of third parties.

The proposed statement should be submitted to approval on an urgent basis.


Henry A. Kissinger

SECRET/NODIS/SENSITIVE



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Classification

Department of State TELEGRAM

INDICATE

☐ COLLECT
☐ CHARGE TO

DISTRIBUTION

ACTION: AmEmbassy PARIS 7068 IMMEDIATE
NODIS
SUBJECT: Accession to US-USSR Accident Measures Agreement

REF: Paris 3986
State 036909

1. Department agrees that we should not leave US position on question of French (or other) accession to the bilateral Accident Measures Agreement in doubt, in view of comments by Quai SecGen. Request that you suggest to him that there are complexities with respect to this question, and that it would be best if French Embassy in Washington would take up this matter with the Department.
 2. FYI. There are several difficult facets of this question, relating to negotiation of the Agreement itself, its final form and language, and UK queries on this same question of accession which lead us to wish to pursue this question with the French in Washington.
- End FYI. GP-3

DRAFTED BY:

PM:RLGarthoff/res

DRAFTING DATE

3/3/72

TEL. EXT.

23302

APPROVED BY:

PM:RISpiers

CLEARANCES:

ACDA/DD - Mr. Farley

S/S - Mr. Miller

EUR - Mr. Springsteen

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